

Papal Condemnation (Sentence) of Galileo

(June 22, 1633)

Whereas you, Galileo, son of the late Vaincenzo Galilei, Florentine, aged seventy years, were in the year 1615 denounced to this Holy Office for holding as true the false doctrine taught by some that the Sun is the center of the world and immovable and that the Earth moves, and also with a diurnal motion; for having disciples to whom you taught the same doctrine; for holding correspondence with certain mathematicians of Germany concerning the same; for having printed certain letters, entitled "On the Sunspots," wherein you developed the same doctrine as true; and for replying to the objections from the Holy Scriptures, which from time to time were urged against it, by glossing the said Scriptures according to your own meaning: and whereas there was thereupon produced the copy of a document in the form of a letter, purporting to be written by you to one formerly your disciple, and in this divers propositions are set forth, following the position of Copernicus, which are contrary to the true sense and authority of Holy Scripture:

This Holy Tribunal being therefore of intention to proceed against the disorder and mischief thence resulting, which went on increasing to the prejudice of the Holy Faith, by command of His Holiness and of the Most Eminent Lords Cardinals of this supreme and universal Inquisition, the two propositions of the stability of the Sun and the motion of the Earth were by the theological Qualifiers qualified as follows:

The proposition that the Sun is the center of the world and does not move from its place is absurd and false philosophically and formally heretical, because it is expressly contrary to Holy Scripture.

The proposition that the Earth is not the center of the world and immovable but that it moves, and also with a diurnal motion, is equally absurd and false philosophically and theologically considered at least erroneous in faith.

But whereas it was desired at that time to deal leniently with you, it was decreed at the Holy Congregation held before His Holiness on the twenty-fifth of February, 1616, that his Eminence the Lord Cardinal Bellarmine should order you to abandon altogether the said false doctrine and, in the event of your refusal, that an injunction should be imposed upon you by the Commissary of the Holy Office to give up the said doctrine and not to teach it to others, not to defend it, nor even to discuss it; and your failing your acquiescence in this injunction, that you should be imprisoned. In execution of this decree, on the following day at the palace of and in the presence of the Cardinal Bellarmine, after being informed and warned in a friendly way by the same Lord Cardinal, you were given an injunction by the then Father Commissary of the Holy Office in the presence of a notary and witnesses to the effect that you must completely

abandon the said false opinion, and that in the future you could neither hold, nor defend, nor teach it in any way whatever, either orally or in writing; having promised to obey, you were dismissed.

Furthermore, in order to completely eliminate such a pernicious doctrine, and not let it creep any further to the great detriment of Catholic truth, the Holy Congregation of the Index issued a decree which prohibited books which treat of this and declaring the doctrine itself to be false and wholly contrary to the divine and Holy Scripture.

And whereas a book has appeared here lately, printed in Florence last year, whose inscription showed that you were the author, the title being *Dialogue by Galileo Galilei on the two Chief World Systems, Ptolemaic and Copernican*; and whereas the Holy Congregation was informed that with the printing of this book the false opinion of the earth's motion and the sun's stability was being disseminated and taking hold more and more every day, the said book was diligently examined and found to violate explicitly the above-mentioned injunction given to you; for in the same book you have defended the said opinion already condemned and so declared to your face, although in the said book you try by means of various subterfuges to give the impression of leaving it undecided and labeled as probable; this is still a very serious error since there is no way an opinion declared and defined contrary to divine Scripture may be probable.

Therefore, by our order you were summoned to this Holy Office, where, examined under oath, you acknowledged the book as written and published by you. You confessed that about ten or twelve years ago after having been given the injunction mentioned above, you began writing the said book, and that then you asked for permission to print it without explaining to those who gave you such permission that you were under the injunction of not holding, defending, or teaching such a doctrine in any way whatever.

Likewise, you confessed that in several places the exposition of the said book is expressed in such a way that a reader could get the idea that the arguments given for the false side were effective enough to be capable of convincing, rather than being easy to refute. Your excuses for having committed an error, as you said so foreign from your intention, were that you had written in dialogue form, and everyone feels a natural satisfaction for one's own subtleties and showing oneself sharper than the average man by finding ingenious and apparently probable arguments even in favor of false propositions.

Having been given suitable terms to present your defense, you produced a certificate in the handwriting of the most Eminent Lord Cardinal Bellarmine, which you said you obtained to defend yourself from the calumnies of your enemies, who were claiming that you had abjured and had been punished by the

Holy Office. This certificate says that you had neither abjured nor been punished, but only that you had been notified of the declaration made by His Holiness and published by the Holy Congregation of the Index, whose content is that the doctrine of the earth's motion and sun's stability is contrary to Holy Scripture and so can be neither defended nor held. Because this certificate does not contain the two phrases of the injunction, namely "to teach" and "in any way whatever," one is supposed to believe that in the course of fourteen or sixteen years you had lost any recollection of them, and that for this same reason you had been silent about the injunction when you applied for the license to publish the book. Furthermore, one is supposed to believe that you point out all of this not to excuse the error, but in order to have it attributed to conceited ambition rather than to malice. However, the said certificate you produced in your defense aggravates your case further since, while it says that the said opinion is contrary to Holy Scripture, yet you dared to treat of it, defend it, and show it as probable; nor are you helped by the license your artfully and cunningly extorted since you did not mention the injunction you were under.

Because we did not think you had said the whole truth about your intention, we deemed it necessary to proceed against you by a rigorous examination. Here you answered in a Catholic manner, though without prejudice to the above-mentioned matters confessed by you and deduced against you about your intention.

Therefore, having seen and seriously considered the merits of your case, together with the above-mentioned confessions and excuses and with any other reasonable matter worth seeing and considering, we have come to the final sentence against you given below.

Therefore, invoking the most Holy name of Our Lord Jesus Christ and his most glorious Mother, ever Virgin Mary; and sitting as a tribunal, with the advice and counsel of the Reverend Masters of Sacred Theology and the Doctors of both laws, our consultants; in this written opinion we pronounce final judgment on the case pending before us between the Magnificent Carlo Sinceri, Doctor of both laws, and Prosecuting Attorney of this Holy Office, on one side, and you the above-mentioned Galileo Galilei, the culprit here present, examined, tried, and confessed as above, on the other side:

We say, pronounce, sentence and declare that you, Galileo, by reason of these things which have been detailed in the trial and which you have confessed already, have rendered yourself according to this Holy Office vehemently suspect of heresy, namely of having held and believed a doctrine that is false and contrary to the divine and Holy Scripture: namely that Sun is the center of the world and does not move from east to west, and that one may hold and defend as probable an opinion after it has been declared and defined contrary to Holy Scripture. Consequently, you have incurred all the

censures and penalties enjoined and promulgated by the sacred Canons and all particular and general laws against such delinquents. We are willing to absolve you from them provided that first, with a sincere heart and unfeigned faith, in our presence you abjure, curse and detest the said errors and heresies, and every other error and heresy contrary to the Catholic and Apostolic Church in the manner and form we will prescribe to you.

Furthermore, so that this grievous and pernicious error and transgression of yours may not go altogether unpunished, and so that you will be more cautious in future, and an example for others to abstain from delinquencies of this sort, we order that the book *Dialogue of Galileo Galilei* be prohibited by public edict.

We condemn you to formal imprisonment in this Holy Office at our pleasure. As a salutary penance we impose on you to recite the seven penitential psalms once a week for the next three years. And we reserve to ourselves the power of moderating, commuting, or taking off, the whole or part of the said penalties and penances.

This we say, pronounce, sentence, declare, order and reserve by this or any other better manner or form that we reasonably can or shall think of. So we the undersigned Cardinals pronounce:

F. Cardinal of Ascoli
B. Cardinal Gessi
G. Cardinal Bentivoglio
F. Cardinal Verospi
Fr. D. Cardinal of Cremona
M. Cardinal Ginetti
Fr. Ant. s Cardinal of. S. Onofrio

[Three judges did not sign the sentence: Francesco Barberini, Caspar Borgia, and Laudivio Zacchia.]